

# EXHIBIT 55

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI  
Oxford Division

JOHN RASH,

*Plaintiff,*

v.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI,

*Defendant.*

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No. 3:20-cv-224-NBB-RP

**DECLARATION OF JOHN RASH**

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I, John Rash, declare the following under penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746:

1. My name is John Rash. I am a resident of Oxford, Lafayette County, Mississippi. I am a documentary filmmaker, photographer, visual artist, and educator. I plan to remain a resident of Oxford and/or Lafayette County indefinitely.
2. In 2018, 2019 and 2020, I organized a free, annual, public, art event, titled PROJECT(ion), as part of the Oxford Fringe Festival, the latter of which is an annual art festival held in Oxford. I was denied a permit to use the Lafayette County Courthouse (the "Courthouse") grounds for PROJECT(ion), which was scheduled to be held on August 8, 2020, after Lafayette County in the summer of 2020 implemented a curfew on the Courthouse grounds from dusk till dawn. The PROJECT(ion) event requires darkness for the projections to be visible, thus any PROJECT(ion) events outdoors must be held when it is dark. I intend to organize and hold PROJECT(ion) in 2021 and indefinitely thereafter.
3. I also am involved in the Oxford Film Festival which includes a public PROJECT(ion) event in Oxford each year as part of the Oxford Film Festival program. These events are held outside when it is dark. By nature, it is not possible to have these events outside

unless it is dark. I intend to continue my involvement with the Oxford Film Festival in 2021 and indefinitely thereafter.

4. I intend to apply for permits to hold public events or gatherings on Lafayette County property including the Courthouse grounds in the future. Absent the curfew, I would apply for such permits on the Courthouse grounds after dark and would continue to do so in the future.
5. I also have attended and documented political gatherings and other events in Lafayette County in the past, including on the Courthouse grounds. I intend to continue to do so in the future. The County's recent changes in the rules for attending political and other events on and around the Courthouse grounds interfere with these plans.
6. In particular, it is not clear to me whether under the County's current rules, I need a permit merely to be present on the Courthouse grounds, for instance, to take photographs or video footage of the grounds or of an event taking place on the grounds. The meaning of the County's rule that the Courthouse grounds are closed thirty minutes before dusk is also not clear to me. These new restrictions make me less likely to go to the Courthouse grounds for political or artistic purposes, because I am concerned that being present on Courthouse grounds might be a violation of the County's rules.
7. It is my belief that the Courthouse grounds are an important place for political and artistic expression. The Courthouse grounds are in the center of the Oxford town square and so are a natural center for the open exchange of ideas.
8. In addition, the Courthouse grounds prominently host a Confederate monument. I am critical of the Confederate monument and of the political and social ideas it represents, and I believe that I – as well as other community members – should have the right to

express my views about the Confederate monument through political speech and artistic expression. Because the Courthouse grounds are the site of the Confederate monument, I believe the Courthouse grounds, including the area around the Confederate monument, are a uniquely appropriate venue for me to express these views.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct. **Executed on February 2, 2021 at Oxford, MS.**

By:   
John Rash